How FEMA Public Assistance Works

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) reimburses eligible public and nonprofit entities for at least 75% of eligible response and recovery costs when authorized in a presidential emergency or major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (P.L. 93-288, as amended).*

WHAT IS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (PA)?

- State governments
- Local governments
- Territorial governments
- Tribal governments
- Eligible nonprofits

Debris Removal

Emergency Protective Measures (emergency personnel, materials, operations)

Reconstruction of disaster-damaged public and eligible nonprofit facilities

HOW IS PA FUNDED?

Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) Appropriations

The source of funding for Stafford Act Assistance.

PA accounts for more than **1/2** of DRF obligations year over year,** 2001-2020.

HOW IS PA AUTHORIZED?

1. Governor or tribal chief executive requests joint Preliminary Damage Assessment
2. Federal, state, local officials assess damage
3. Governor or tribal chief executive submits declaration request that includes PA
4. FEMA assesses request and makes recommendation to President to approve or deny request
5. President issues declaration authorizing PA or denies request
6. State, tribe, or territory becomes PA Primary Recipient if PA is authorized
7. Applicants develop PA projects involving response and recovery work

HOW IS PA STRUCTURED?

FEMA

FEMA reviews PA projects and obligates funds for approved projects to Primary Recipient.

Primary Recipient

- States
- Territories
- Tribes

With Stafford Act declarations authorizing PA

Primary Recipients administer PA in jurisdiction and disburse funds to Applicants.

PA Applicant

- State governments
- Local governments
- Territorial governments
- Tribal governments
- Eligible nonprofits

In jurisdictions with PA authorizations

Applicants execute PA projects.

PA Project

- Debris removal
- Emergency Protective Measures
- Reconstruction and replacement of disaster-damaged facilities

Required as a result of declared incident and grouped into logical work

HOW DO APPLICANTS RECEIVE PA FUNDS?

Applicants are reimbursed for *at least* 75% of the costs of approved work.

1. Applicant submits Project Worksheets (PW) to FEMA and Primary Recipient.
2. FEMA approves PW. FEMA obligates funds from Disaster Relief Fund to Primary Recipient.
3. Applicant requests reimbursement and submits supporting documentation to Primary Recipient.
4. Primary Recipient reviews request for compliance and accuracy and approves request.
5. Primary Recipient disburses funds to Applicant to reimburse approved costs.

Applicant executes and pays for approved work (may be concurrent).

Sources: CRS interpretation of 44 CFR §§206.31-206.45; 206.200-206.205, 206.220-226. "Applicant" refers to "Subrecipient" in 2 C.F.R. §200.93. *Authorized in sections 402, 403, 406, 418, 419, 428, and 502. **Does not include COVID-19 Obligations.

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